

CHAPTER 8—DESIGN OF THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS ASSESSMENT

BLUEPRINT

The visual and performing arts assessment includes four disciplines: dance, music, theater, and visual arts. The arts framework is based on Maine’s *Learning Results*, which identifies three content standards in the arts, as listed below:

- **Creative expression:** Students create and/or perform to express ideas and feelings.
- **Cultural heritage:** Students understand the cultural contributions (social, ethical, political, religious dimensions) of the arts, how the arts shape and are shaped by prevailing cultural and social beliefs and values, and recognize exemplary works from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
- **Criticism and aesthetics:** Students reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of art works.

These three standards were used to create the reporting category framework for the visual and performing arts, shown below.

Visual and Performing Arts Framework

Discipline	Standard		
	A. Creative Expression	B. Cultural Heritage	C. Criticism and Aesthetics
Dance			
Music			
Theater			
Visual Arts			

Each row and each column of the framework constitutes a reporting category for school- and district-level results in the MEA—for example, music/cultural heritage. Student-level results were not reported in the visual and performing arts, as no common items were used in this area.

It should be noted that not all of the performance indicators associated with each content standard (see *Learning Results*) can be assessed reliably and validly using a paper-and-pencil test. For example, some of the performance indicators included under the standard for “creative expression” would best be measured in other ways. For this reason, additional methods of assessment for these performance indicators are being studied.

The distribution of questions, or emphasis, across the arts disciplines in the MEA varies from one grade level to another, as shown in the table below.

Discipline	Grade		
	4	8	11
Dance	10%	10%	15%
Music	40%	40%	35%
Theater	10%	10%	15%
Visual Arts	40%	40%	35%

CONTENT SPECS

The MEA visual and performing arts assessment included multiple-choice, short-answer, constructed-response, and extended-response questions. Short-answer questions, which were new in the revised MEA, required students to answer using one or two words or a short phrase. Also new were the extended-response questions in the visual and performing arts. They are similar to constructed-response questions except that they are more complex, requiring students to analyze and solve challenging problems using multiple approaches in a 10–20 minute response time. Each type of question was worth a specific number of points, as shown below:

Type of Question	Possible Score Points
Multiple Choice	0–1
Short Answer	0–2
Constructed Response	0–4
Extended Response	0–8

TEST DESIGN

The tables below summarize the numbers and types of matrix-sampled and pre-test questions that were used in the visual and performing arts assessment.

Grade 4: Matrix/Pre-test					
Session	MC	SA	CR	ER	Time (minutes)
1	4	1	2	—	26
2	4	1	3	—	26
Total	8	2	5	—	

Grades 8 and 11: Matrix/Pre-test					
Session	MC	SA	CR	ER	Time (minutes)
1	8	2	2	1	42
Total	8	2	2	1	

Key

- MC = multiple-choice questions
- SA = short-answer questions
- CR = constructed-response questions
- ER = extended-response questions

The charts on the following pages outline the total number of possible points—as reported—by learning results and item type.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
Number of Points Possible
Grade 4

Standard	Common				Matrix					Total Possible
	MC	SA	CR	Points	MC	SA	CR	Points	Percent	Points
Dance					17	4	12	33	100	33
Music					27	12	56	95	100	95
Theater					17	4	28	49	100	49
Visual Arts					27	12	24	63	100	63
Creative Expression (Standard A)					37	14	32	83	100	83
Cultural Heritage (Standard B)					29	12	40	81	100	81
Criticism and Aesthetics (Standard C)					22	6	48	76	100	76

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
Number of Points Possible
Grade 8

Standard	Common				Matrix						Total Possible
	MC	SA	CR	Points	MC	SA	CR	ER	Points	Percent	Points
Dance					13	8	8	24	53	100	53
Music					35	8	20	40	103	100	103
Theater					13	6	20	24	63	100	63
Visual Arts					27	8	12	28	75	100	75
Creative Expression (Standard A)					31	14	24	48	117	100	117
Cultural Heritage (Standard B)					34	8	8	32	82	100	82
Criticism and Aesthetics (Standard C)					23	8	28	36	95	100	95

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
Number of Points Possible
Grade 11

Standard	Common				Matrix						Total Possible
	MC	SA	CR	Points	MC	SA	CR	ER	Points	Percent	Points
Dance					14	4	8	24	50	100	50
Music					29	6	24	32	91	100	91
Theater					18	4	8	40	70	100	70
Visual Arts					27	6	16	32	81	100	81
Creative Expression (Standard A)					28	8	16	56	108	100	108
Cultural Heritage (Standard B)					33	4	12	32	81	100	81
Criticism and Aesthetics (Standard C)					27	8	28	40	103	100	103

